INTERN IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

Opening Doors for Careers in Conservation

MPA again partnered with the National Links Foundation to host the Masonville Cove Links WildSTEM Summer Internship, recruiting students from local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other schools, exposing the interns to practical experience, possible careers, and leadership mentoring opportunities.

This year, four interns gained insight into conservation careers, as well as valuable soft skills such as networking, public speaking, and professional etiquette. The interns built meaningful connection and recieved helpful career guidance. Feedback from the intern class helped shape the program in real time, reinforcing its value as a path to leadership and impact in the environmental field.

LaTanya Baptiste, who supported the implementation of the Wildlife Management Plan, conducted a mammal survey and initiated a new trail project. A senior at Bowie State University, she also created promotional materials for a fall mammal survey program. “It was a very uplifting and motivating experience,” she said.

Mofiyinfoluwa Ajao, a junior at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, reflected that the program “piqued my interest in exploring conservation fields.” She designed an exhibit table layout to recruit volunteers for the Friends of Masonville Cove, developed promotional content, and proposed future engagement programming.

While interns benefited from insight from professionals, the program incorporated opportunities for them to shape the future work environments they were learning about. **Jermaine Simmons** shared insight about how young professionals like him can feel welcome in careers outside of their comfort zone, saying, “Any environment where I can be heard and listened to is one where I can grow and thrive.” This senior at Coppin State University contributed to enhancing the visitor experience at Masonville Cove with new momentum following its designation as a Chesapeake Gateways Network Site. He supported trail connection planning and developed a proposal for kayak launch amenities.

Ibrahima Adija, a senior currently serving as vice president of the Coppin State Honors College Student Advisory Board, completed a three-year initiative to install a nature playground at Masonville Cove, building on proposals and designs from previous intern cohorts. As project manager, she oversaw the final installation phase.

The Governor recognized the program by awarding a citation to MPA’s Office of Navigation, Innovation, and Stewardship Director, Holly Miller, for her support of the program. Through programs like the Masonville Cove Links WildSTEM Internship program, MPA is able to help address disparities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math by providing students with innovative environmental opportunities.



LaTanya Baptiste



Mofiyinfoluwa Ajao



Jermaine Simmons



Ibrahima Adija